

## These Days . . . . . Camelot Equaled 'Costalot'

By John Chamberlain

THE LATIN American countries that waxed furious when they learned that the Pentagon was contemplating a multimillion-dollar study of "the potential for internal war" in Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela might have spared themselves some agony.



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For even if the so-called Project Camelot had not been publicly buried by President Johnson, it would have revealed nothing that is not known already to practically anybody who has good Latin American sources—and it would have revealed that much too late.

These surveys! They assemble so much ponderous machinery to measure over a protracted period of time what a good reporter can get by judicious interviewing within a couple of weeks that they are invariably on the slow freight. I remember working on the editing and illustrating end of a Government study of the comparative strength of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia on the Eastern Front in 1942.

For six months a group of professors, many of them quite able, made like beavers to correlate every last scrap of information they could get. Much of it

came from the daily newspapers.

BY THE TIME the job was completed the German army had made a decisive move—and the work had to be done all over again. The cream of the ironic jest is that the U.S. military attache in Moscow had been feeding more—and better—material to Gen. George Marshall than he would have gotten from the survey even if it had reached his desk in time to be of any use.

All of which raises a question: Why did the Pentagon feel it needed a Project Camelot to tell it about Latin American revolutionary potentialities if its own military attaches are on the ball? No possible Project Camelot for pre-World War II Nazi Germany could ever have matched the material that our military attache in Berlin, Col. Truman Smith, gathered in the course of his daily duties.

A good military or naval attache is supposed to be on top of situations, with sources that it would take months for a team of academic researchers to tap. If a Project Camelot was indeed needed for Latin America, then we must assume that our military, naval and air force attaches in Chile, Argentina and the other countries are spending all too much time on the cocktail circuit.

Moreover, if a Project Camelot was justified, what are we to say of the Central

Intelligence Agency and the area desks of the State Department itself? If the CIA files aren't filled to the gun-wales with relevant stuff about Latin American revolutionary potentialities, then why are we spending billions to keep CIA personnel employed? And why do we have a State Department? Or are we to believe that the CIA and the State Department have secrets that are too precious to divulge to the Pentagon on request?

OF COURSE, you might say that our military attaches and CIA operatives and diplomats are not social scientists. As is well known, "social science research" consists of surveying the Indians of the Peruvian altiplano and recording their grunts as they are asked leading questions.

The researcher invariably finds that the Indians don't live very well, and they might very well be predisposed to listen to Castroites. Which is the sort of thing that anyone can glean from the reports put out each month by Paul D. Bethel, the able editor of the bulletin published by the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba. The bulletin can be had for free.

Information is what we have in abundance. The main trouble is that nobody has time to read it, it's so all-fired voluminous.

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